

THE USE OF THE INTERNET IN ESL WRITING CLASSROOM:
A CASE STUDY

A thesis submitted to the Graduate School in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree Master of Science (Educational Management),
Universiti Utara Malaysia

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ABSTRAK

Kajian kes ini bertujuan meneroka kemungkinan penggunaan Internet di dalam pengajaran penulisan Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua di kalangan pelajar-pelajar UiTM Arau. Kajian kualitatif ini meneroka faedah-faedah serta batasan-batasan pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua di peringkat universiti secara dalam talian (*online*) melalui Internet. Walaupun terdapat peningkatan dari segi penulisan di kalangan sebilangan pelajar, namun peningkatan tersebut bukanlah fokus kajian ini. Aspek-aspek teknikal dan pedagogi telah diteliti di dalam mengendalikan kelas maya (*virtual*) penulisan Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua. Dapatan kajian diperolehi melalui kaedah tiga penjuru (*triangulation method*) di mana pemerhatian ke atas pelajar yang menggunakan Internet untuk pembelajaran penulisan telah dijalankan. Pelajar-pelajar tersebut serta pensyarah juga telah ditemubual. Untuk tujuan kajian kes ini, seramai sepuluh orang pensyarah telah ditemubual, manakala lapan orang pelajar telah dipilih secara rawak untuk mengikuti kelas penulisan melalui Internet. Daripada pemerhatian serta temubual dengan pelajar dan pensyarah, didapati secara umumnya subjek kajian bersetuju bahawa Internet boleh digunakan untuk mengajar penulisan Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua. Walaubagaimanapun, kebanyakan menyebut masalah-masalah infrastruktur, bahan dari Internet dan juga silabus. Kajian kes ini membolehkan universiti membuat persediaan sebelum meneroka penggunaan Internet di dalam kelas penulisan Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua. Kajian ini juga membolehkan pensyarah sedar tentang batasan-batasan penggunaan Internet di dalam pengajaran penulisan Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study is to explore the possibilities of using the Internet in ESL writing classroom, particularly among UiTM Arau students. This qualitative study explores the benefits and limitations of teaching university-level English as a Second Language (ESL) online, via the Internet. Although some students may improve their writing, writing improvement is not the focus of the study. Both the technical and pedagogical aspects of facilitating a virtual ESL writing classroom are examined. The findings of this study were gathered using the triangulation method of observing the students using the Internet to learn writing as well as interviewing both the students and lecturers. Ten English lecturers at UiTM Arau were interviewed. Besides the lecturers, eight students were randomly chosen. From the observations, the interviews of both the lecturers and the students, it was found that generally the subjects agreed that the Internet could be used in ESL writing classroom. However, most of them cited the problems of infrastructure, materials on the Internet as well as the syllabus. This case study allows the university to prepare itself before embarking into the use of the Internet in ESL writing classroom. This study also allows the lecturers to be aware of the limitations of using the Internet in ESL writing classroom.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

English is an international language and it is used as one of the main means of communication in many countries throughout the world. In countries such as the United States of America or the United Kingdom, where the majority of its people speak English, it is considered as the first and official language. In countries like India and Zimbabwe where English is not a native language and where there are many dialects; the people use this language to communicate officially between each other.

It is not surprising, bearing in mind the importance of English at the present time, that many non-native English speaking countries which are moving towards "technological advancement and modernisation", are teaching English as a popular foreign language. One such country is Malaysia (Greenbaum, 1996). In the Malaysian language policy, English is

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